

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 07761 081757Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----001440 090922Z /10

R 081130Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8562
INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7761

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MNUC, PK
SUBJECT: PUBLICITY ON AID SUSPENSION

REF: ISLAMABAD 7679

1. IN MEETING AUG. 8 WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT BRIEFLY ON SPATE OF PUBLICITY AND EDITORIALS IN PAK PRESS GROWING OUT OF AUG. 5 REUTERS STORY ON SUSPENSION OF NEW AID COMMITMENTS. I NOTED THAT USG HAD SOUGHT SUCCESSFULLY FOR MANY MONTHS TO PLAY SUSPENSION IN LOW-KEY FASHION AND AVOID PUBLICITY. HOWEVER, WE HAD BEEN PREPARED TO ANSWER DIRECT QUESTIONS AND HAD DONE SO WHEN REUTERS AND OTHERS APPROACHED DEPT RECENTLY. I SAID WE APPRECIATED GOP DESIRE TO KEEP ISSUE LOW-KEY ALSO. I EXPRESSED HOPE THAT RECENT FLURRY OF PAK PRESS COMMENT COULD SUBSIDE, AND I POINTED OUT THAT NEITHER USG NOR GOP INTERESTS WOULD BE WELL SERVED BY FULL AIRING OF ALL ASPECTS OF OUR DISPUTE ON REPROCESSING ISSUE. I GAVE HIM COPY OF LATEST DEPT Q&A (STATE 199302).

2. IN REPLY SHAHNAWAZ MADE LENGTHY BUT NON-POLEMIC DEFENSE OF MFA'S PRESS STATEMENT ON REUTERS STORY.
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NOTING THAT GOP HAD TAKEN AND ABIDED BY DECISION NOT TO PUBLICIZE ANY ASPECT OF NEWSOM OF JACOMET VISITS HERE, SHAHNAWAZ SAID GOP HAD BEEN FACED WITH FLURRY OF STORIES EMANATING FROM PARIS AND WASHINGTON THAT HAD NECESSITED COMMENT. SHAHNAWAZ CONCLUDED WITH ASSURANCE THAT GOP HAD NO DESIRE TO FUEL FURTHER CONTROVERSY.

3. COMMENT: I BELIEVE IT WAS APPROPRIATE AT THIS TIME
TO REMIND MFA THAT RESTRAINT WILL BE REQUIRED BY ALL
PARTIES IN FUTURE HANDLING OF REPROCESSING CONTROVERSY
AND THAT THERE ARE DANGERS TO GOP IF ALL STOPS ARE
PULLED (E.G., CALLING ATTENTION TO ZIA'S INTERVIEW IN
SAUDI NEWSPAPERS). FUUTURE PRESSURES ON GOP MAY MAKE
ITS RESTRAINT DIFFICULT BUT WE CAN HOPE THAT MFA WILL
AT LEAST SEEK TO EXERCISE A MODERATING INFLUENCE IN THE
WEEKS AHEAD. HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ISLAMA07761
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850103-2249
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780888/aaaacwbj.tel
Line Count: 71
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4f2c0467-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 78 ISLAMABAD 7679
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1807931
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PUBLICITY ON AID SUSPENSION
TAGS: MNUC, SOPN, US, PK
To: STATE KARACHI MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4f2c0467-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014